

February 27, 2001

The Salisbury Planning Board held its regular meeting on Tuesday, February 27, 2001, in the City Council Chambers of the Salisbury City Hall at 4:00 p.m. with the following being present and absent:

PRESENT: DeeDee Wright; Sean Reid; Elaine Stiller; Leigh Ann Loeblein; Mark Lewis; Andy Storey; Jeff Sowers; Ken Mowery; Jeff Smith

ABSENT: John Daniels; Fred Dula; Mark Perry

STAFF: Harold Poole; Dan Mikkelson; Janice Hartis

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lewis. The minutes of January 23 and February 13, 2001, were approved as published.

### **ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT**

Chairman Lewis convened a courtesy hearing for the consideration of change in all or part of the sign ordinance pertaining to off-premise signs, particularly billboards. The Board is not recommending any change to the Zoning Ordinance today. This is a chance for the Board to hear the public's opinion as it pertains to billboards in the city's zoning jurisdiction.

Senior Planner Harold Poole began the meeting by giving a brief overview on several committee meetings discussing this matter. This committee was set up in November of last year and has had four meetings thus far. The committee has received information from Scenic North Carolina on cities and counties in the state that have prohibited future billboards. Billboard regulations that are presently in the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to Sign Overlay Areas B and C have been distributed to members. Sign Overlay B is located along the interstate and Overlay C is along parts of South Main Street and Jake Alexander Boulevard West. The committee has also had a van tour of those areas where billboards are allowed. The last amortization schedule we had—7 ½ years, from May 1986 to November 1993—resulted in the removal of about 17 billboards. The widening of Interstate 85 will take about six additional billboards. That leaves approximately 25 to 30 billboards remaining in Salisbury and its extraterritorial area.

The committee met with Dr. Charles Floyd, a retired University of Georgia professor. He strongly feels that no more billboards should be allowed. Darryl Kluttz, the N. C. DOT representative from the Salisbury office who handles billboard permitting in this area has also met with the committee. He discussed the impact the widening of Interstate 85 is having on some billboards and the elimination of certain billboards along the interstate. The committee discussed a six-month moratorium on new and relocated billboards. The Planning Board endorsed this idea which was subsequently approved by City Council.

The following spoke on the issue:

Charles Webster, 220 South Ellis Street – Agrees with Scenic America and Scenic North Carolina that billboards are visual pollution. Logo boards provide adequate information for travelers. Billboards should be removed.

William Earnhardt, owns a billboard on Bendix Drive – Most big cities in America have billboards. When he travels, he looks for billboards to find places to eat and to spend the night. He and his wife earn about 25 percent of their retirement from billboard rent. Removing billboards would take part of their livelihood.

William Brown, 175 Miles Avenue – Representing Beavco, Inc. Renting their property for the location of three billboards within the city limits—one at 1331 South Main Street, one on Lutheran Synod Drive, and one at the end of Bendix Drive next to the Super 8 motel. These billboards are a source of revenue to them as owners of the property. They are crucial to the businesses which lease them. His company owns the Super 8 motel as well as the Crown Point mini-storage. The billboards they have placed on Interstate 85 are their most important source of advertising. Business at the motel increased dramatically once the billboard was erected on the interstate. They are losing the billboard on Lutheran Synod Drive due to the interstate widening and would like to replace it further back on the property once the right-of-way issue is settled. The state DOT logo signs are beneficial for businesses located immediately off an interstate exit. Billboard advertising covers businesses more widely spaced than those that are right off an exit.

Curry Krider, 220 Krider Drive – Has a billboard on his property along Interstate 85. The revenue from billboards helps somewhat in offsetting taxes. Many signs along the interstate appear to be 1950s and 1960s-type wooden signs which are not attractive or beneficial to the city. Suggested studying the feasibility of looking at sign design and put a moratorium on those wooden signs that are decaying. He's losing his sign, but wants to maintain the right to replace it. Many businesses are not advertised on the state's logo signs. We need to regulate the appearance of the signs.

Skeet Long, Infinity Outdoor, Charleston, SC – Billboards are good for the city because they bring in business. Only businesses within a certain distance of an interstate interchange are eligible to pay rent to the state for a logo sign. If your business is not within that distance, you don't qualify for a logo sign. Billboards overcome that problem because they can advertise a business any distance away from the interstate. Billboards have always been with us in one form or another.

Jim Bryant, Triad Investment Co. – We need to remember fairness to businesses. Salisbury has relatively few districts where billboards are permitted. How many other businesses that are permitted in those districts also being eliminated? Once the interstate is widened, approximately 50% of the billboards will be lost. Salisbury's billboard regulations are very restrictive. Hotels, motels, restaurants, hospital, etc., will lose business. Interstate 85 is not a scenic corridor nor the Blue Ridge Parkway. It's a commercial corridor. Ample laws are in place.

Jim Pridgen, Fairway Outdoor Advertising in Greensboro – His company took down signs in this community that were legally built based on the amortization passed in 1986. Now the city is talking about changing the ordinance again. Asked how many signs were here two or three years ago and how many signs are here today, as far as off-premise signs are concerned. Only two permits for billboards have been issued in the past year. Dr. Charles Floyd is not an authority on outdoor advertising. His ultimate goal is to eliminate billboards. Fairway's signs are located on privately owned property where they pay rent. The state logo signs are located on public property. No one has invited a representative from the billboard industry to sit down with the committee. Suggests that sign representatives be invited to give professional opinion.

The chairman closed the courtesy hearing.

(b) Board Discussion:

Andy Storey moved to refer the matter back to the committee. The motion was seconded by DeeDee Wright with all members voting AYE. Everyone was informed that the next committee meeting was scheduled for Monday, March 5, 4:00 p.m.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(a) Legislative Committee – Jeff Sowers reported for the committee on the following items.

Dumpster Screening. The first issue discussed was dumpster screening. There is nothing in the ordinance requiring screening of dumpsters, either in group developments or any other site. The committee is recommending the following text amendment:

If a dumpster is provided, it shall be screened with either an opaque wall or fence which is constructed of materials which are compatible with adjacent building, or with a total visual screen of plant material. This shall apply to all new development, as well as existing development if expanded by 25% or more.

This comes as a motion from the committee to approve. The motion was seconded by DeeDee Wright with all members voting AYE.

Open storage. Open storage is currently allowed only in industrial districts and not in commercial districts. Wal-Mart is located in an industrial district and is permitted open storage. K-Mart is located in a commercial district and is not allowed to have open storage. The committee is looking at staff's recommendation to prohibit open storage in all non-industrial group developments, even if they are located in industrial districts. The committee does not have a recommendation at this time.

Parking Requirements for Medical Uses. The zoning ordinance requires the same minimum number of parking spaces for medical uses as well as most office or retail uses. The requirement of one parking space per 200 square feet is not holding up. The committee is looking at ways to rectify this by singling out medical services to require more parking spaces. There are several ways of doing this which the committee will continue to discuss.

Accessory Structures. Salisbury's ordinance only allows accessory structures in the rear yards of residential zones. These accessory structures are mainly detached carports and garages. Many cities allow accessory structures in the rear and side yards. The Development Services Division, which enforces the Zoning Ordinance, has noticed a sharp increase in violations with accessory buildings in the side yard, primarily due to inexpensive metal pole carports. The committee referred this matter to the Community Appearance Commission for their input.

Activation of Landscape Ordinance. The landscape ordinance is currently activated only when there are 12 or more parking spaces being provided. The Legislative Committee is recommending a text amendment which would activate the landscape ordinance when an existing structure is expanded by 25% or more. This recommendation comes from the committee as a motion to approve. The motion was seconded by DeeDee Wright. Senior Planner Harold Poole stated that the landscape requirements would also apply to all new developments of any type. There has been some question as to whether the requirements apply to new development or just to new development that has 12 or more parking spaces. The proposed text amendment would apply to all new development and all existing structures that are expanded by 25% or more. This text amendment will be brought back to the Planning Board in ordinance format for formal adoption. The motion carried.

(b) Sidewalks, etc., Committee - Jeff Smith reported for the committee. The committee had decided to split apart the issues of sidewalks and curb and gutter. The sidewalk issue has gone through the Planning Board, and now awaits action by City Council. The committee met again to discuss whether to allow valley curbing to continue as the standard, or to change the standards to require vertical curbing in new subdivisions. The committee realized that the curb and gutter issue was only one issue of many that needed to be looked at together. It was the consensus of the committee to disband with the hope that as we move forward with the Salisbury Vision 2020, we'll have an opportunity to come back and revisit this issue in a larger picture than just curb and gutter.

(c) Jake Alexander Blvd. Committee - DeeDee Wright reported for the committee. The committee looked at 12 policies from the Salisbury 2000 Plan that appear to be applicable to the zoning and non-zoning aspects of the plan. There are another 23 policies that the committee needs to review.

(d) Nominating Committee Report - Leigh Ann Loeblein reported for the committee. The committee is nominating DeeDee Wright as Chairman and Fred Dula as Vice Chairman for FY 2001-2002. The Rules of Procedure indicate that officers shall be elected in March of each year. The rules do not take into account the two Board meetings each month. It was the consensus of the Board that the Nominating Committee's report be received as information at today's meeting, elections will be held at the first meeting in March, and new officers will assume their duties at the first meeting in April.

The Nominating Committee is also recommending that the Rules of Procedure Committee look at setting term limits for the Chairman. It has been the tradition of the Board that when someone is elected Chairman, that person usually serves as chairman until his term expires. Conceivably, someone could serve as chairman for five years.

Chairman Lewis directed the Rules of Procedure Committee to meet and have a recommendation ready for the second meeting in March relative to a term limit for the chairman and clarification of election of officers.

**SALISBURY 2020 VIDEO**

The Board viewed the Salisbury 2020 video prepared in conjunction with the Vision 2020 Plan.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

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Chairman

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Secretary